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History of Ancient Civilization. By CHARLES SEIGNOBOS. Translated and edited by ARTHUR HERBERT WILDE. New York: Scribner, 1906. Pp. 373. \$1.25 net.

The writer of general history and of the history of civilization encounters two serious obstacles. In the first place, he must out of the bewildering maze of facts select those that are central and all-inclusive. In the second place, he must weave these facts into a story that will interpret and interest. Facts amount to nothing if we do not know what they mean, and cannot apply this meaning in our individual and social life. In a word, the writer of general history and of the history of civilization must have critical acumen, generalizing power, and facile expression. The combination is not ordinary, and this explains how it is that some of our works on general history are either dry-as-dust or entirely untrustworthy.

In the work before us Professor Seignobos, we think, meets these requirements with a degree of success that is altogether unusual. His association with Langlois in the introduction to historical studies, and his own studies in various periods of history, gave him the facts. Nature and experience combined to give him the power to criticize and interpret them. His practical interest in the secondary schools no doubt aided him in the very necessary work of simplification. The result is the most satisfactory history of civilization that has yet appeared. The present work is only the first part, or ancient civilization. It treats of the origin of civilization; history and the records; the ancient history of the East—Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, the Aryans of India, the Phoenicians; and of the Greeks and Romans.

Much attention is given to religion, laws, and the arts. In short, sweeping, living, illuminating paragraphs the author carries us along the course of man's development from its beginnings to the time of Theodosius in 391 A. D. The book will interest scholars and general readers, and be especially prized in secondary schools.

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